

REMARKS:

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1-8 are amended and claim 14 has been added. No new matter is added. Thus, claims 1-14 are pending and under consideration. The outstanding rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e):

Claims 1-4 and 9-13 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2002/0165803 (lwase), and claims 5-8 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,370,513 (Kolawa).

lwase inputs ingredient information put near an ingredient or on an ingredient placed within a shop when necessary ingredients for making a particular dish are purchased, and detects a name of one or more deficient ingredients for making the particular dish. In lwase, a recipe-specific deficient ingredient is provided to indicate a deficient article of food for a pre-selected recipe (see, paragraph 84 and FIG. 30). For example, as shown in FIG. 30, when a user chooses a dish, lwase determines whether commodities purchased by the user lack one of the ingredients for the dish (see also, paragraph 136).

Kolawa recommends an item to a user based on how close the item matches the user's preferences. Kolawa compares vector positions of a selected item's product vector against vector positions of a user preference vector for determining values as the positions in the user preference vector (see, col. 9, lines 64 through col. 10, line 7). That is, Kolawa is limited to recommending an item to a user using a vector representative of the user's preferences.

In contrast, the present invention associates or links information of each ingredient of a menu item with substantially identical ingredients of other menu items. That is, the present invention compares an amount of a requested ingredient responsive to a search with amounts of other substantially similar ingredients such that information of new menu items is provided by considering ingredients remaining from previously provided menu items. For example, as shown in FIGS. 11A-11D, a remaining portion of an ingredient used in a previously recommended menu (i.e., Chinese cabbage) is indicated as available when a recipe that includes the same is selected.

Independent claims 1-4 as amended recite that the present invention stores a sale unit for every ingredient where the sale unit of each ingredient is "stored in association with the stored menu information including substantially similar ingredients of other menus" and

compares “the amount of said ingredient searched out by the ingredient amount searching means with amounts of ingredients corresponding to the sale unit searched by the sale unit searching means and outputting a result indicative thereof”.

Independent claims 5-8 as amended recite that the present invention includes, “storing a first successful sale coefficient representing a probability of purchasing ingredients of a first menu and a second successful sale coefficient representing a probability of purchasing ingredients of a second menu inquired in relation to the first menu [where] ingredients of the first menu are linked with substantially similar ingredients of the second menu” and computing the expected sales of “ingredients of the first menu based on the ingredients of the first menu” and “ingredients of the second menu based on the ingredients of the second menu”. Computing of the expected sales is particularly not found or suggested by the prior art, particularly Kolawa.

Independent claim 13 as amended recites that the present invention includes, “outputting data of an ingredient, a sale unit and an amount of the ingredient upon a menu search”, where “the amount of the ingredient indicated as a result of the menu search is compared with amounts of ingredients corresponding to the indicated sale unit and an indication is provided when the ingredient indicated is less than the sale unit” and “the sale unit of each ingredient is associated with the menu information including substantially similar ingredients of other menus”.

It is submitted that the independent claims 1-8 are patentable over Iwase and Kolawa.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from independent claims 1-8 are patentably distinguishable over Iwase and Kolawa. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, as recited in claims 9-12, the present invention includes, “transmitting ingredients of a first menu and a number of distributions of the first menu to a user terminal” and “transmitting ingredients of a second menu inquired in relation to the first menu and a number of the inquiries of the second menu to the user terminal”. Iwase and Kolawa, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest, “transmitting ingredients of a first menu and a number of distributions of the first menu to a user terminal” and “transmitting ingredients of a second menu inquired in relation to the first menu and a number of the inquiries of the second menu to the user terminal”, as recited in claims 9-12.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

NEW CLAIM:

New claim 14 is added herein to recite, "associating an ingredient constituting a first menu item among the menu items with a substantially similar ingredient constituting a second menu item among the menu items" and "searching ingredient information of each of the menu items responsive to a search request of the ingredient in the first menu item and indicating when the ingredient in the first menu item is less than an amount of the substantially similar item of the second menu item".

It is submitted that new claim 14 is patentably distinguishable over lwase that is limited to determining whether commodities purchased by a user lack one of the ingredients for a particular dish and Kolawa that is limited to recommending an item to a user using a vector representative of the user's preferences.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: _____

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By: _____



J. Randall Beckers
Registration No. 30,358

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501